Fact sheet on legalizing prostitution

When prostitution is legalized, three things occur:

1. There is an explosive growth in the commercial sex market that is accompanied by an increase in organized crime.
   a. The best example of this is the city of Amsterdam.¹

2. Sex trafficking increases because demand exceeds the supply of women in legal prostitution.
   a. In a study analyzing over 150 countries, the authors documented that human trafficking inflows increase where prostitution is legal.²

3. Inherent harms of prostitution are not mitigated but may actually increase with legalization.
   a. Rape- In Nevada, the counties with legal prostitution have 5 times the rate of rape than similarly populated counties that do not have legal prostitution.³
   b. PTSD- In Australia where prostitution is legal⁴:
      i. 47% of women in prostitution met criteria for PTSD currently or in the past.
      ii. 85% reported work-related violence
   c. Emotional consequences in Australia⁵:
      i. 87% of women reported mild or moderate depression
      ii. 54% reported current severe depression symptoms
      iii. 42% have attempted suicide while 74% have experienced suicidal ideation

The experience in rural counties of Nevada, the only location where prostitution is currently legal within the U.S.⁶

1. 81% of women in legal prostitution want to leave it.
2. There is a clear linkage between prostitution and sex trafficking in Nevada.
3. Women in legal prostitution suffer from violence, threats, physical injury, HIV and other STI’s.
4. 23% of the women in legal brothels were prostituted as a child.

The experience from Rhode Island where indoor prostitution was legal from 1980-2009⁷

1. Rape was not decreased with decriminalization of prostitution.
2. The rates of gonorrhea and chlamydia were not decreased by decriminalization of prostitution.


5 Ibid

6 Farley M. *Prostitution and Trafficking in Nevada: Making the Connections*, 2007. Prostitution Research & Education; San Francisco CA.